

F I N A L

**Minutes of the
Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board**

**Thursday, March 20, 2003
Virginia Department of Forestry
Charlottesville, VA**

Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board Members Present

David L. Moyer, Chairman
A. Dewey Bond
J. Carlton Courter, III
Robert M. Hall
Granville M. Maitland

Joseph H. Maroon
Linda S. Campbell
M. Denise Doetzer
W.P. Johnson

Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Members Not Present

Dr. Kriton Hatzios
Jean R. Packard

Dr. Lorenza Lyons
Dr. Steve Umberger

Staff Present

Leon E. App, DCR
Larry Gavan, DCR
Jonathan T. Phillippe, DCR

Jack E. Frye, DCR
Michael R. Fletcher, DCR
Stuart Wilson, DCR

Others Present

James G. Byrne, VASWCD
J. Michael Foreman, Department of Forestry

Call to Order

Chairman Moyer called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. and declared quorum present.

As the war in Iraq had just begun, Mr. Moyer called for a moment of silence for the country.

State Forester Jim Garner welcomed members to the Department of Forestry. He thanked the members of the Board for their partnership and how they have worked together over the years.

Minutes of January 14, 2003

MOTION: Ms. Campbell moved that the minutes of the January 14, 2003 Soil and Water Conservation Board meeting be approved as submitted.

SECOND: Mr. Maitland

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Legislative Update

Mr. Maroon gave an update regarding legislative activities. At this point none of the legislation has been signed. A handout was made available to the Board members.

BUDGET ACTIONS

Even with the much welcomed increases, DCR's overall reductions in state general funds remain high: 12.8 % reductions for FY 03 and 17.3 % reductions for FY 04. These figures continue to represent substantial cuts to the Department's programs, staffing, operations, and conservation partners. The cuts will continue to be felt and even more so after July 1 when the FY 04 reductions are effective.

Soil and Water Programs

Soil and Water Conservation Districts - Restores funding by \$1,400,000 for biennium (\$200,000 of the \$423,498 cut in FY 2003; \$1,216,620 in FY 2004). Language was included for the districts to recover a portion of their costs for service delivered to landowners and for district-owned equipment used by landowners in lieu of charging rental fees.

BMPs - Funded \$1,000,000 for FY 2004 from dredging royalties once they are deposited into Marine Habitat and Waterways Improvement Fund at VMRC.

TMDL, Soil Survey - No funds restored in Conference Report.

Dam Safety – Language was included to authorize DCR to develop a fee system to recover up to 90 % of the costs of inspection, plan and administrative review, and certifications of non-Soil and Water Conservation District dams.

Conservation Partners

Chippokes Foundation – Restored as a separate agency for the time being; \$151,057 GF, \$67,103 NGF, and two FTEs restored. DCR Director required to develop an operating plan to merge Chippokes under DCR by July 1.

Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department – Restored \$130,000 GF and two FTEs. Language that calls for DCR to develop a plan for merging the agencies is now moot given that the legislation to cause the merger failed on the legislature's last day.

Virginia Outdoors Foundation – Restores funding by \$150,000 for the biennium: \$50,000 in FY 2003 and \$100,000 in FY 2004. Annual support will now be \$450,000 in FY 2003 and \$500,000 in FY 2004.

Virginia Land Conservation Foundation - Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation language changing \$2 op-out fee on the vehicle registration fee to a \$1 mandatory fee. Retains language from 2002 Session that collections over the \$5 Million threshold would go to the Virginia Land Conservation Fund. It is the intent of the General Assembly that this program shall expire in 2008.

Local Urban Programs Update

Mr. Gavan gave the Local Urban Programs update.

Mr. Moyer noted that the Board is responsible for Erosion and Sediment programs that are in effect. He noted the difficulties with Lake Martin. He also said that at a future time the Board may become more involved with the local programs.

Mr. Gavan distributed copies of the Carroll County proposed alternative inspection plan. He noted that the plan is accordance with the guidelines.

Mr. Maroon said that once this plan is approved, the county would still have the customary six month probationary period.

MOTION: Mr. Maitland moved that the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board accept Carroll County's Proposed Alternative Inspection Program for consideration and action at the May meeting.

SECOND: Ms. Campbell

DISCUSSION: The County and regional DCR staff worked together to draft the proposed program to more effectively utilize local resources to address specific development and environmental conditions within the county.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gavan noted that staff have completed or have underway 26 reviews in the southern rivers watershed and 17 reviews in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Most recently staff has reviewed plans for Isle of Wight County, Augusta County and the Town of Ashland.

Mr. Hall noted that there is a possibility that Buchanan County may deliver the E&S program to the local Soil and Water Conservation District. Some of the problems include the lack of certified personnel. He said that the district intended to work with the County for resolution.

Lake Martin Update

Mr. Wilson gave an update concerning the Lake Martin issue.

The court case is still set for August 4, 2003. There was a hearing on February 28 where the developer submitted a petition for dismissal. The county got a split decision on that ruling.

The EPA is currently not taking any action.

MOTION: Ms. Campbell moved that the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board receive the update of activities from DCR staff outlining the status of the County's lawsuit against the major developer and that the Board requests the County to continue its efforts to expedite resolution to facilitate remediation of the Lake Martin watershed. The Board also requests DCR staff to continue communication with EPA relative to EPA's administrative order and to re-affirm to EPA the Board's interests in an expedited resolution of this matter.

Further, the Board directs Fairfax County to continue to provide updates to the Board relative to the resolution of the lawsuit and proposed plans and schedule for commencement of restoration actions and in restoration. The County should insure that affected homeowners are provided input into the process of determining final restoration plans. These updates shall continue until restoration actions have been completed.

SECOND: Mr. Hall

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

District Director Resignations and Appointments

Mr. Frye presented the following list of District Director Resignations and appointments.

Big Sandy

Resignation of Alicia O'Quinn, Buchanan County, effective 2/19/03, appointed director position (term of office expires 1/1/05).

Recommendation of Bobby Ervin O'Quinn, Buchanan County to fill unexpired term of Alicia O'Quinn (term of office to begin on or before 4/19/03 – 1/1/07).

Headwaters

Resignation of Thomas A. Stanley, Augusta County, effective 3/14/03, appointed Extension Agent director position (term of office expires 1/1/05).

Recommendation of Christophe L. Lawrence, Augusta County, to fill unexpired Extension Agent term of Thomas A. Stanley (term of office to begin on or before 4/19/03 – 1/1/05).

Lord Fairfax

Resignation of Edward J. Ward, Warren County, effective 3/12/03, elected director position (term of office expires 1/1/08).

Recommendation of Darryl G. Merchant, Warren County, to fill unexpired elected term of Edward J. Ward (term of office to begin on or before 4/19/03 – 1/1/08).

Pittsylvania

Resignation of Stephen J. Britt, Pittsylvania County, effective 1/1/03, appointed Extension Agent director position (term of office expires 1/1/05).

Recommendation of Bruce Jones, Pittsylvania County, to fill unexpired Extension Agent term of Stephen J. Britt (term of office to begin on or before 4/19/03 – 1/1/05).

MOTION: Mr. Bond moved that the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approve the resignation and appointment actions as presented by DCR staff and that staff be directed to communicate the Board actions to the affected Districts.

SECOND: Mr. Maitland.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carries unanimously.

Mr. Frye presented a request from the J.R. Horsley District.

MOTION: Mr. Maitland moved that the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approve the appointment of Stacey Vargo to serve as secretary-treasurer of the J.R. Horseley Soil and Water Conservation District with § 10.1-5323 of the *Code of Virginia*.

SECOND: Mr. Johnson.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Date to File Nominating Petitions for November 2003 District Elections

Mr. Frye noted that it is the responsibility of the Board to set the deadline for filing nominating petitions.

MOTION: Mr. Bond moved that, in accordance with state law (§ 10.1-523.D and § 24.2-503) of the *Code of Virginia* the Board establish June 10, 2003, 7:00 p.m. as the deadline for acceptance of the required statements by candidates seeking to qualify for the office of Soil and Water Conservation District Director and appear on the November 2003 General Election Ballot and that the Board Secretary be directed to communicate this action to the State Board of Elections.

SECOND: Mr. Hall.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

VSWCB Policy on "Financial Assistance for Soil and Water Conservation Districts" amended May 16, 2002

Mr. Frye noted that the DCR staff recommended no changes in the format.

MOTION: Mr. Hall moved that the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board continue the VSWCB Policy on “Financial Assistance for Soil and Water Conservation Districts” amended by Board action on May 16, 2002 for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2003 – June 30, 2004.

SECOND: Ms. Campbell.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Frye addressed the 2003-2004 performance deliverables. Suggested changes from the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation District Directors were presented. After considerable discussion, the Board decided to postpone action on the VASWCD changes until the matter can be further studied.

MOTION: Ms. Campbell moved that the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board amend the Performance Deliverables for the DCR/SWCD FY 2003-2004 as follows:

- Eliminating parentheses found within the 5th bulleted item which pertains to SWCD longer term planning and contain the words “consistent with the election cycle of district directors,” and
- Adding the words “through a facilitated process” within the 5th bulleted item as documented within the draft revised list presented by DCR staff.

SECOND: Mr. Maitland

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Lake Barcroft Watershed Improvement District Budget

Mr. Frye presented the Lake Barcroft Watershed Improvement District Budget for review. Mr. Bond noted that the District had approved the budget as submitted.

MOTION: Ms. Campbell moved that the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, following approval of the Lake Barcroft Watershed Improvement District (WID) FY 2004 Budget by the Northern Virginia SWCD at their February 25th, 2003 meeting and in accordance with state law (§ 10.1-626 of the *Code of Virginia*), the Board approve the FY 2004 Budget as submitted and that the Board secretary be requested to notify the Lake Barcroft WID.

SECOND: Mr. Maitland.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously with Mr. Bond abstaining.

Dam Safety Certificates and Permits

Mr. Phillippe presented the list of Dam Safety Certificates and permits.

INV. NO.	NAME	CITY/COUNTY
<u>Dam Safety Alteration Permit</u>		
None		

Dam Safety Construction Permit

13715	Orange Raw Water Reservoir Dam	ORANGE
17925	Leeland Lake Dam	STAFFORD

Dam Safety Operation & Maintenance Certificates

Class I Regular

01518	Staunton Dam	AUGUSTA
13902	Dry Run Dam #101 (Lake Arrowhead)	PAGE
17102	Stoney Creek Dam #10	SHENANDOAH

Class I Conditional

08908	Marrowbone Creek Dam #1	HENRY
72002	Upper Norton Reservoir Dam	NORTON

Class II Regular

00301	Beaverdam Reservoir Dam	ALBEMARLE
08905	Leatherwood Creek Dam #2A	HENRY
17709	Fawn Lake Dam	SPOTSYLVANIA
66001	JMU (Newman) Dam	HARRISONBURG

Class II Conditional

08902	Leatherwood Creek Dam #5	HENRY
08905	Leatherwood Creek Dam #3	HENRY
08907	Leatherwood Creek Dam #6	HENRY
08910	Lanier Dam	HENRY
18712	Loch Linden Dam	WARREN

Class III Regular

00347	Chisholm Dam	ALBEMARLE
01901	Evergreen Lake Dam	BEDFORD
02901	Willis River Dam #1A	BUCKINGHAM
02902	Willis River Dam #1E	BUCKINGHAM
02909	Willis River Dam #7	BUCKINGHAM
02919	Willis River Dam #2	BUCKINGHAM
04901	Trices Lake Dam	CUMBERLAND
06113	Barr Dam	FAUQUIER
09905	Madison Dam	KING GEORGE
11311	Malvern Dam	MADISON
13704	Grymes Mill Dam	ORANGE
14315	Camp Shawnee	PITTSYLVANIA
17717	Hazel Grove Dam	SPOTSYLVANIA

Class III Conditional

None

Extension to May 2003 Board Meeting

00924 (2R)	Buffalo River Dam #4 (Mill Creek)	AMHERST
01906 (2C)	Springhill Lake Dam	BEDFORD
02301 (1R)	Carvin Cove Dam	BOTETOURT
03108 (2R)	Wildwood Recreation Dam #1	CAMPBELL
05901 (1R)	Lake Barcroft Dam	FAIRFAX
05907 (1R)	Pohick Creek Dam #8 (Lake Huntsman)	FAIRFAX
05910 (2R)	Lake Fairfax Dam	FAIRFAX
05922 (1R)	Pohick Creek Dam #4 (Lake Royal)	FAIRFAX
05928 (1R)	Pohick Creek Dam #3 (Woodglen Lake)	FAIRFAX
06707 (3R)	Melody Lake Dam	FRANKLIN
14701 (3R)	Buffalo Creek Dam #1 (Grandview Lake)	PRINCE EDWARD
14702 (3R)	Buffalo Creek Dam #3 (Little Creek Lake)	PRINCE EDWARD
14703 (3R)	Buffalo Creek Dam #4 (Spring Creek Lake)	PRINCE EDWARD
14706 (3R)	Buffalo Creek Dam #2 (Stockton Lake)	PRINCE EDWARD
14707 (3R)	Buffalo Creek Dam #5 (Lake Buffalo)	PRINCE EDWARD
14708 (3R)	Buffalo Creek Dam #6 (Bell Lake)	PRINCE EDWARD
14709 (3R)	Buffalo Creek Dam #7 (Lake Gayle)	PRINCE EDWARD
14710 (3R)	Buffalo Creek Dam #8 (Lake Abilene)	PRINCE EDWARD
14711 (3R)	Buffalo Creek Dam #9 (Wilkes Lake)	PRINCE EDWARD
14734 (2R)	Bush River Dam #2	PRINCE EDWARD
14736 (3R)	Bush River Dam #7	PRINCE EDWARD

Extension to July 2003 Board Meeting

00353 (3R)	Hollymead Dam	ALBEMARLE
00371 (3R)	Blue Ridge Forest Dam (Mallard Lake)	ALBEMARLE
06111 (3R)	Springhill Farm Dam	FAUQUIER

06146 (3R)	Willow Pond Farm Dam	FAUQUIER
06913 (1R)	Lake Frederick Dam	FREDERICK
08302 (3R)	Lake Conner Dam	HALIFAX
12502 (3R)	Lake Monocan	NELSON
14312 (3R)	Arey Dam	PITTSYLVANIA
14506 (3R)	Lower Byers Dam	POWHATAN
15702 (3R)	Whippoorwill Dam	RAPPAHANNOCK
17701 (2R)	Ni River Dam #1	SPOTSYLVANIA
17703 (3R)	Flythe Dam	SPOTSYLVANIA
17718 (3R)	Lake Pocahontas	SPOTSYLVANIA
17912 (3R)	Lake Curtis Dam	STAFFORD

Out of Compliance

07915	Greene Mountain Lake (Class 2 Cond.)*	GREENE
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* Board-Directed Letter Sent to Owner and Adjoining Property Owners

MOTION: Mr. App, as proxy for Mr. Maroon, moved that the list of Dam Safety Certificates and Permits be approved as submitted.

SECOND: Ms. Campbell.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Agency Reports

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Ms. Doetzer presented the following report:

Farm Bill Programs in Virginia

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** – State Technical Committee reviewing recommendations for conservation practices and policies to include in 2003 EQIP program. EQIP signup and provisions for 2003 program will be made after apportionment received.
- **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)** – Recommendations reviewed by State Technical Committee and STC. Program announcement and signup will be made after apportionment received.
- **Farmland/Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP)** – Final rule published and comment period closed. Waiting national Request for Proposals to be

published to solicit applications from eligible entities. Expect this within next month.

- **Conservation Security Program (CSP)** – Advanced notice of proposed rulemaking and request for comments on CSP released in the *Federal Register* on February 10. Comments will be used to help develop the proposed rule.

Technical Service Providers

- Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill) for the first time provides funds to pay the use of private and public sector technical assistance providers beyond those employed by USDA NRCS.
 - Interim final rule was published on November 21, 2002 for public comment. Comments closed on February 19, 2003. Target date for rule to go into effect was March 1.
 - Interim rule outlines how providers would be certified or decertified, and how they are to be paid.
 - Work by all technical service providers – public or private must meeting NRCS technical standards and specifications. NRCS field staff will certify work for payment.
 - March 1st a new website was made available for private sector contractors to register and certify on TECH REG.
 - Because of our current Memorandum of Understanding, SWCD employees and SWCDs cannot be considered as private sector Technical Service Providers through the TECH REG process. However, we are working on other means where SWCDs can be technical service providers, such as:
 - Through a contribution agreement where SWCDs put up 50 percent of the technical services needed to accomplish the goals, or
 - Through a competitive cooperative agreement in response to a Request for Proposals (RFP)

Budget/Appropriations

- Omnibus Bill containing 11 appropriation bills for FY 2003 passed by the House and Senate on February 17, 2003. Legislation is 3,000 pages in length with overall cost of \$397.4 billion. Signed by the President on February 20, 2003.
- Next step – Office of Management and Budget will work on the apportionment to determine how much funding goes into each Farm Bill program. Then the agency (NRCS) will determine how much funding each state will receive.
- Farm Bill programs may roll out sometime in April or May – the time frame depends on the appropriation and rulemaking processes.

Competitive Sourcing

- Part of the President's Management Initiative to increase government performance and efficiency through use of public-private competitions. These

competitions compare the cost of performing a specific function in-house with the cost of accomplishing the same work through private sector contracts, and then using the most cost-effective source.

- Goals have been set for competitive sourcing starting in FY 2003 through FY 2005. “Some staffs may be reorganized and/ or downsized to become more competitive while other positions may ultimately be converted to private sources.”
- There are two freezes currently in effect:
 - As of February 23, there is a hiring freeze on certain functions and series which is in effect until December 31st or until the appropriate competitive sourcing study is done and decisions are made.
 - There is also a moratorium on employment actions and major expenditures that went into effect on January 3, 2003, which was necessary due to the uncertainty of fiscal year 2003 funding.
- All jobs will be looked at except District Conservationists and Contracting Officers because they are inherently governmental.
- Positions currently being evaluated at the national level are: Civil Engineering Technicians and Geologists.
- At the state level are: Soil Conservationists, Technicians, Soil Scientists and Clerical staff.
- Expect the national studies to take 12-18 months to complete. The state studies for 2003 will be completed by the end of the fiscal year (September 30th).

USDA Office Closures

- Secretary Veneman in her testimony before the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee stated that 200 field offices would be closed. This is part of the Secretary’s management initiative in an effort to provide better and more efficient service. Key points are:
 - No offices have been selected
 - The 200 offices to be consolidated are out of over 2600 Service Centers in the three county-based agencies. FSA, NRCS and RD.
 - No one Agency will be hit with 200 consolidations alone.
 - The taskforce is finishing up the work on the criteria to determine which offices might be consolidated.
 - This is a “mortar and bricks” effort, and no jobs are targeted.
- Final decisions on any closures are not imminent, and it is expected that the National and State FACs will be part of final decisions.

Mr. Foreman presented the following report:

- The U.S. Forest Service sponsored Potomac Watershed Partnership has been funded for another year. This is the 3rd of a 5-year program to restore the Potomac River including the Shenandoah River. The Department is expecting around \$200K to continue this work. Work includes riparian restoration, forest health and fire prevention activities. There will be a field tour on May 8-9.
- The department has been working with our sister agencies on the upcoming Governor's Summit. WE are focused on the land conservation and water resources parts. We will be assisting the small work group discussion and providing staff assistance to the summit.
- On April 15, there will be the second meeting for the new Chesapeake Bay Riparian Buffer Goal. As a part of the C2K, the Department is leading the effort to develop the new goal. Virginia's recommendation is due to the Bay Executive Council by September 2003. At the next meeting, we can present our thinking on this important issue.
- The Department now has 65 vacancies. The budget cuts will not allow us to fill most of these but we are hopeful we can fill a few.
- Several field staff are in Texas helping the Shuttle Disaster Recovery efforts. They are due back this weekend. We find ourselves more and more assisting in emergency efforts nationwide.

Virginia Cooperative Extension Service

Not represented.

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Mr. Courter noted that the recent rainfall is good news. He said that hopefully 2003 will be a normal year for rainfall.

There are many challenges in the agricultural community. There are now restrictions on Russian and Mexican imports. Cattle prices are not good. Milk prices are not good.

However, he said the fundamentals are good and that things should improve once the war situation is resolved.

The state had the smallest tobacco quota since the 1930s. VDACS is attempting to get farmers to diversify their crops.

VDACS faced \$5.8 million in budget reductions. The department tried to protect crops programs and institutional knowledge. They have reduced travel, marketing and trade shows.

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

Mr. Frye gave the following report:

Budget outlook and monthly financial management:

DCR will continue monthly district payments until a change in guidance is received.

Prior to adjournment of the 2003 General Assembly, the Budget Conference Committee reached agreement on significant restorations in SWCD operational funding reductions. The Committee resolved to restore \$200,000 of the \$423,498 shortfall for FY03, and \$1,200,000 of the collective reductions for FY04. These collective reductions for FY04 in operating funds includes an 8% reduction from FY01 equating to a cut of \$343,380; a reduction of \$214,615 as enacted by Governor Warner this past October; plus the reduction of \$1,002,005 introduced by the Governor in his December of 2002 budget.

The restoration of these funds in FY03 will mean districts will experience a further cut of approximately 6% of each district's total approved operating funds administered by DCR for this fiscal year. For next fiscal year (FY04) the total funding for all districts would be \$3,941,000 which is roughly 8% less than the full funding level experienced by districts in FY01 (\$4,301,000). Budget preferences of this administration and the General Assembly continue to be matters of debate and will not be resolved until conclusion of the Veto Session (April 2, 2003).

DCR/SWCD Grant Agreements for FY04 Operational Funds:

DCR staff has begun the process of considering any changes to the list of grant agreement performance deliverables for the upcoming fiscal year. Prior to presenting any suggested revisions to the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board (Board) during the Board's upcoming March 20th, 2003 meeting DCR provided the draft document to the VASWCD leadership and has requested feedback.

Agricultural BMP Cost-Share Program:

Thus far \$701,305 of the \$1.9 million available for cost-share has been disbursed to SWCDs. The program year ends June 30 with final reports due July 11. The move to web-based reporting is advancing and expected to be operational by July 1. Any necessary training will be completed prior to July 1 with CDCs assisting beyond that date. While the General Assembly's Budget Conference Committee determined up to \$1,000,000 will be made available to SWCDs in FY04 for the Cost-Share program, the source of those funds depends on royalties collected by the Marine Resource Commission for a large dredging project. Actual dollars and their availability for disbursements is dependent upon the Marine Habitat and Waterways Improvement Fund and the revenues generated from two planned dredging projects.

SWCD 4-Year Program and Resource Plan:

Progress continues on development of a changed approach to SWCD long term planning that takes advantage of the 4-year election cycle of district directors. The process enables the "new" boards to establish their goals for the period of time that coincides with their terms of office. And for the first time, ties long term planning to an election cycle of districts that is now on a consistent schedule for every elected director presents new opportunities. Districts and their partners will be able to collectively tally and summarize long-term goals of every SWCD and look collectively at the grassroots priorities of every

district. This can have profound impacts on setting statewide priorities from many perspectives –programmatic, resource needs, legislative actions, and others.

CDCs will be discussing options for SWCD planning during upcoming district monthly meetings and providing an overview of the new approach. The new approach is one planning option for district consideration.

CDCs will also be asking each district to designate one individual to serve as the district's planning coordinator. The primary functions of a district planning coordinator will be to guide long term and annual planning processes and monitor implementation results. Many districts will choose to designate a district staff person to fulfill this role, others may identify a district director or associate. Periodically these planning coordinators will be offered opportunities to meet on a regional basis to become better versed in planning processes and options available to each district. It is also envisioned that opportunities for training will be made available to those that may wish to carry out functions that could include group facilitation or other related skills.

Conservation Partner Training Efforts:

Through efforts of the Joint Employee Development (JED) state team, training events are being delivered on 3 “core” courses for the benefit of district staff and other conservation partner agencies.

- Plans are under way for NRCS delivery of the EP&I (Effective Presentation & Instruction) training program in one or more areas of the state. Two training teams have been established and a third may be formed. The course may be offered as early as this spring.
- DCR will be scheduling delivery of the Conservation Selling Skills fundamentals course for up to 30 participants this fall.
- The third “core” course pertains to a regional approach for delivery of Conservation Orientation for New Employees. NRCS under the leadership of Ken Carter piloted a 4 day program in Service Units 4 and 8. Attendance was very good and evaluations revealed favorable responses. Other regions of the state will offer the course when sufficient needs exist. The southwestern JED team is currently finalizing plans to deliver the course.

SWCD Audit Services:

The contract for performance of SWCD audits has been completed for this year by the accounting firm of Robinson, Farmer, Cox and Associates (RFCA). Audits conducted on 17 SWCDs prior to November 1, 2002 for the fiscal year that ended June 30th, 2002 resulted in no significant (negative) findings. CDCs are providing each audited district with a copy of their final audit report. Where specific shortcomings were identified, CDCs will be discussing any needed corrective measures with appropriate individuals. On a broad scale, there were several matters identified by RFCA that they recommend all districts be made aware of and address as necessary. Correspondence has been issued to every district transmitting this information to further improve the financial management of SWCDs. Clean audits continue to be a strength and important area in continuing to receive state and other funds.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program: As of January 28, 2003 we have a total of 1,746 approved contracts and 14,611 acres statewide (Bay = 860 contracts & 9,914 ac., Southern Rivers = 886 contracts & 4,697 ac.). Funding for CREP has remained largely

intact through the budget process so far. The reduction of \$303,481 this year and \$263,890 in FY04 is not expected to have any immediate impact but will require higher levels of funding in future biennia to match the commonwealth's 20% overall commitment.

Clean Water/Bay Friendly Farm Award Program:

Recognition of the 10 Grand Basin winners is planned during each of the upcoming VASWCD Area Meetings. Through the efforts of CDCs and district staff, representatives from each winning farm family are being extended an invitation to receive their award at the appropriate Area meeting. We wish to convey our thanks and appreciation for the willingness of districts and the VASWCD to partner on these recognition efforts!

SWCD Director Leadership Retreat:

Plans are moving ahead to conduct of the retreat at the Smith Mountain Lake 4H Center on April 24th and 25th. The Retreat has been rescheduled following cancellation for February 27th and 28th due to inclement weather. Sixty-one district directors representing approximately 30 SWCDs were previously registered to attend the event. It is hoped attendance will improve further for the upcoming event.

Mr. Maroon noted that the Governor's Natural Resources Leadership Summit will be held in April. This Summit is by invitation only for about 150 leaders in the Natural Resources community. Mr. Maroon will provide a follow up report in May.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Other Business

Mr. Maitland asked members who would be willing to participate in the Ad Hoc Committee. Ms. Campbell will serve as vice chair.

Jack Frye and Mark Meador will represent DCR.

Mr. Hall invited members to hold a meeting at Breaks Interstate Park. General discussion followed and it was agreed to look at that possibility for September.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board will be Thursday, May 15, 2003 at 9:30 a.m. at the Virginia Department of Forestry.

Adjournment

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

David L. Moyer, Chair

Joseph H. Maroon, Recording Secretary